



## U.S. Department of Justice

*United States Attorney*

*Eastern District of Pennsylvania*

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 17, 2005

### **FORMER WEBMASTER CHARGED WITH CRASHING RELIEF ORGANIZATION'S COMPUTER SYSTEM DURING TSUNAMI**

PHILADELPHIA – United States Attorney Patrick L. Meehan today announced an indictment charging NICHOLAS GIOVANNI with two counts of computer intrusion, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 1030(a)(5)(A)(i).<sup>1</sup>

GIOVANNI is a former senior developer and webmaster for International SOS Assistance, Inc. ("SOS"), the world's largest medical assistance/logistics company. SOS provides security and medical support through global access to a network of facilities and services to more than 70 percent of Fortune 500 companies. Additionally, SOS has contracts with the United States Departments of State and Defense, as well as numerous foreign governments. SOS helps these organizations manage the health and safety risks facing their travelers, global workforce, and customers by providing, among other things, emergency medical care and evacuation services.

GIOVANNI created a hidden malicious code on SOS's computer network known as a "Trojan Horse," or "Trojan," that enabled him to improperly access the SOS network even after he left the company in November 2004. GIOVANNI used this Trojan to disable SOS's website on November 30, 2004 and December 26, 2004. The December 26, 2004 attack occurred during the Indian Ocean tsunami disaster and seriously disrupted the coordinated relief efforts of SOS. It does not appear, however, that GIOVANNI stole any confidential customer information.

"This defendant chose to launch an attack during one of the worst natural disasters in the history of civilization and because of his actions, people who were reaching out for help via the Internet couldn't get it," said Meehan. "SOS is set up so people in an affected area can access vital medical assistance information online. In this instance, you had people in the midst of an unimaginable catastrophe desperately seeking online information and not being able to get it because the system was down."

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<sup>1</sup> An indictment or information is an accusation. A defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

INFORMATION REGARDING THE DEFENDANT

NAME	ADDRESS	AGE
Nicholas Giovanni	Dublin, California	37 years old

If convicted the defendant faces a maximum possible sentence of 20 years imprisonment \$500,000 fine and a \$200 special assessment.

The case was investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation with the assistance of the U.S. Attorney's Office in the Northern District of California and has been assigned to Assistant United States Attorney Derek A. Cohen.

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